

Submission For Comprehensive Plan Changes in the Lincolnia Planning District

Proposal Type: Site Specific

Subject Property: Halifax Office Park 5250 and 5252 Cherokee Ave. Alexandria VA 22312

Tax Map Parcels: 0723 27 0001 & 2, consisting of 3.2 acres in total

Submitted by: N. Bhagat, Owner of lot 2 and representative for the Owner of Lot 1

3. a) Proposed Site Specific Amendment to Comprehensive Plan Amendments:

Redevelopment Of Halifax Office Park to residential apartments with home offices, enabling live-work, and/or uses such as hotel, nursing home, or a community center, and limited to 130,000 SF and a building height of 90 feet or 7 stories (compared to the existing 4) as measured from the uphill side entrance.

Explanation for 3. (c):

Halifax Office Park is an obsolescing Office Park that is facing increasing vacancy, poor economics and obsolescing building systems making it unable to compete in the current market place for office space. The Office market has changed and isolated Office Parks that are not in CBD, or metro locations face obsolescence and eventual boarding up. On the other hand, there is need for apartments in close in locations inside the Beltway, that are easily accessible to the Beltway and I-395, and are compatible and synergistic to the surrounding redevelopment.

The proposal responds to the County's initiatives on Office Repurposing. Adjacent jurisdictions, such as Alexandria City and Arlington have similar initiatives and some jurisdictions offer cash or tax incentives and height increases for such office building redevelopment.

The proposal advances the following major policy objectives:

--It revitalizes an obsolete office park in Lincolnia District to higher and better use that will reverse declining property value of the Office Park, and most likely enhance the values of the surrounding properties as well. County revenues will thereby increase, and economic development will be further supported by the investment in the redevelopment.

--It will require gutting the existing interior and bringing the buildings to the current County codes for environmental protection, fire safety, and ADA compliance, rather than the obsolete codes of 1981, when the building plans were approved. For example, the HVAC will be Freon free, the buildings will be brought into the ADA codes established in 1990 and later, and the building will be greener and energy efficient.

--It requires less parking spaces and therefore will permit conversion of a significant number of excess parking spaces to open space, thereby reducing storm water runoff into Chesapeake Bay.

--Because of its location outside a CBD or transportation hub, the units will be priced lower than those at more favored County locations, and therefore more affordable. Discussion of specific ADU related proffers, however, will be undertaken during the rezoning process.

--Because the intended uses are less intensive than general office use, the number of peak hour trips generated will be less than that permitted by current use. Moreover, new tenant prospects, that are permitted by the current zoning, such as the 2020 Census, limousine services, moving company, will generate above average number of trips and often involve large vehicles and trucks. Furthermore, peak hour traffic on the bridge over Indian Run will be in the same direction with residential use of the Office Park, compared to its current office use. Traffic across the bridge will therefore will be safer and faster.

The proposal is consistent with the Concept for Future Development, which limits employment related development in Suburban Neighborhoods, where a mix of residential uses and building types are permitted and preferred. The Office Park consists of two mid-rise office buildings that are stranded amongst a park and residential development on all sides. The redevelopment to residential or uses stated would be less intensive than the current general office use, and more consistent with the surrounding land use.

The proposal responds to the Submission request by the Lincolnia District Task Force, set up by the BOS and staff in recognition that Lincolnia Area Plan is outdated, and needs to be updated to promote economic revitalization. Approval by the Task Force will clarify the intent of all the stakeholders to approve the redevelopment proposal conceptually and thereby encourage the developer to spend their resources in detailed evaluation, plans, engineering, and design an innovative project that will become the subject of a zoning application in the future.

Although the proposal will be enacted, if approved, several years from now, and may have to be fine tuned, the proposal is consistent with current research derived from several transportation and land planning studies and trends, including the ITE trip generation manuals, parking requirements by type of land use, trends in multimodal transport and ride sharing, trends in internet enabled working from home offices, and redevelopment activity in the surrounding neighborhood.

4. Contact Information: Nazir Bhagat 703-850-8802 cell
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